

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00 CIEP-01

OES-06 /102 W

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P 151610Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5792

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN PRIORITY

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AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY

USEC BRUSSELS PRIORITY

USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EEC, XF, TS

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SUBJECT: EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE ENDS ON POSITIVE NOTE--WITHOUT
SURPRISES

REF: TUNIS 1054

1. SECOND SESSION OF ERUO-ARAB DIALOGUE ENEDED AT DAYBREAK
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, AFTER ALL-NIGHT COMMUNIQUE DRAFTING

SESSION, MORE MARKED BY ADMINISTRATIVE DELAYS AND HAGGLING OVER DETAILS THAN BY SUBSTANTIVE DIFFERENCES. MAIN POINT OF CONTENTION DURING COURSE OF THREE-DAY MEETING WAS ARAB DELEGATION'S DEMAND THAT PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR POLITICAL CONSULTATION BE ESTABLISHED, WHICH EUROPEANS SUCCESSFULLY RESISTED. (PRESS STATEMENT MADE BY LEADER OF ARAB DELEGATION ON FEBRUARY 11 THAT GENERAL COMMITTEE HAD ESTABLISHED POLITICAL AS WELL AS COOPERATION SUB-COMMITTEES PROVED WITHOUT FACT AND WAS NOT REPEATED IN SUBSEQUENT OFFICIAL REFERENCES.)

2. MAJOR PART OF COMMUNIQUE DID DEAL WITH POLITICAL QUESTIONS, HOWEVER. ISSUE OF ESTABLISHMENT OF POLITICAL COMMITTEE WAS FINESSED WITH STATEMENT THAT EUROPEAN SIDE TOOK NOTE OF ARAB PROPOSAL, AGREEING TO "EXAMINE PROPOSAL WITH ALL ATTENTION THAT IT IS DUE." REST OF POLITICAL PORTION OF COMMUNIQUE WAS NON-POLEMIC AND GENERAL RESTATEMENT OF POSITIONS TAKEN BY BOTH SIDES IN OPENING STATEMENTS AND SUPPLEMENTARY REMARKS. SPECIFIC REFERENCE WAS MADE TO COMMON EUROPEAN POSITION ESTABLISHED IN LONDON JANUARY 31 AND TO COMMON ARAB POSITION TAKEN IN CAIRO JANUARY 15. MUTUAL SATISFACTION WAS EXPRESSED REGARDING "POSITIVE SPIRIT, OBJECTIVITY AND FRANKNESS" WHICH CHARACTERIZED MEETING AND PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE EXCHANGES, ETC.

3. BOTH SIDES RECOGNIZED SERIOUSNESS OF MIDDLE EAST DISPUTE AND REAFFIRMED THAT SOLUTION OF PALESTINIAN PROBLEM, BASED ON RECOGNITION OF LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, CONSTITUTED AN ESSENTIAL FACTOR IN ESTABLISHMENT OF A JUST AND DURABLE PEACE. AGREEMENT ON PRINCIPLE OF CONFIDENTIAL

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UNIFIED AND INDEPENDENT LEBANON WAS NOTED, AS WELL AS COMMON OPPOSITION TO ANY INITIATIVE TO MODIFY UNILATERALLY STATUS OF JERUSALEM. "PREOCCUPATION" WAS EXPRESSED OVER ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF ARAB TERRITORIES SINCE 1967 AND "OPPOSITION" WAS VOICED TO ESTABLISHMENT OF ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES.

4. SECOND PORTION OF COMMUNIQUE DEALT WITH REPORTS OF CO-CHAIRMAN OF WORKING GROUPS AND SUB-GROUPS. WE ARE INFORMED THAT THESE GROUPS WORKED WELL AND WITH MINIMUM OF DIFFERENCES. ARAB SIDE REPORTEDLY WAS CAUTIOUS AND UNWILLING TO MOVE AS QUICKLY ON SOME ISSUES AS EUROPEANS WERE PREPARED TO DO. DETERMINATION TO "INCREASE COMMERCIAL COOPERATION" WAS STRESSED ALTHOUGH NO SPECIFICS WERE GIVEN. THE COMMUNIQUE NOTED ARAB SIDE'S REQUEST FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIAL AND PREFERENTIAL RELATIONSHIP (ALL INCLUSIVE) WITH COMMUNITY AND EUROPEAN RESPONSE THAT EXISTING STRUCTURES WERE APPROPRIATE FOR SOLVING IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS. NOTE WAS MADE OF ARAB PROPOSAL FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF EURO-ARAB CENTER

FOR COMMERICAL COOPERATION, WHICH IS TO BE RE-EXAMINED AFTER ARAB SIDE PRESENTS MORE PRECISE OUTLINE OF PROPOSED OBJECTIVES AND FINANCING OF SUCH CENTER. AGREEMENT ON EXCHANGE OF CULTURAL, SCIENTIFIC AND HISTORICAL MATERIAL WAS ANNOUNCED, AS WELL AS COOPERATION IN THE INFORMATION FIELD. SEVERAL JOINT AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS WERE AGREED UPON IN IRAQ AND SUDAN. AN AD HOC COMMITTEE WAS ESTABLISHED TO STUDY FUTURE PROJECTS FOR CONSIDERATION IN DIALOGUE, WITH ARAB SIDE PROMISING \$15 MILLION TO FINANCE THIS PROJECT. FINANCIAL WORKING GROUP WAS CHARGED WITH DRAWING UP PROPOSALS FOR INVESTMENT GUARANTEE ACCORD. (ARAB SIDE REPORTEDLY EXPRESSED GREAT INTEREST IN THIS PROJECT THROUGHOUT TUNIS MEETING, BUT NO FIRM COMMITMENTS WERE TAKEN THAT WE ARE AWARE OF.) ANOTHER AD HOC GROUP WAS CHARGED TO STUDY TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY AND TO INVESTIGATE POSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING PERMANENT CENTER FOR EURO-ARAB TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER.

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5. FINALLY, IT WAS AGREED IN PRINCIPLE THAT THIRD SESSION
OF EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE WILL BE HELD IN SEPTEMBER.
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6. COMMENT: OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT DIALOGUE PARTICIPANTS
BELIEVE MEETING WENT AS WELL AS COULD HAVE BEEN EXPECTED.
ARABS WERE CLEARLY UNHAPPY OVER EUROPEAN REFUSAL TO SET
UP POLITICAL BODY BUT ACCEPTED IN RELATIVELY GOOD GRACE
EUROPEAN SIDE'S CONTENTION THAT IT LACKED AUTHORITY TO DO
SO. LOCAL MEDIA GAVE PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO "POSITIVE"
EUROPEAN STATEMENTS IN MIDDLE EAST ISSUE, AND MEETING HAS
BEEN CHARACTERIZED IN TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT PRESS AS "A STEP
FORWARD."

EUROPEANS WE HAVE SPOKEN TO EXPRESSED GENERAL SATISFAC-
TION THAT ARAB SIDE DID NOT PRESS HARDER ON POLITICAL
COMMITTEE ISSUE AND ON PROPOSAL FOR SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP
WITH COMMUNITY. MEMBERS OF TWO EUROPEAN DELEGATIONS NOTED
PERSONAL VIEW, HOWEVER, THAT NINE MAY HAVE TO AGREE
EVENTUALLY TO FORMATION OF SOME KIND OF BODY FOR POLITICAL
CONSULTATION. HOPE IS THAT TUNIS AGREEMENT TO EXAMINE
ARAB PROPOSAL WILL ALLOW TIME FOR SUFFICIENT PROGRESS TO BE
MADE TOWARDS GENERAL ME SETTLEMENT BEFORE NEXT DIALOGUE
MEETING IN FALL WHEN QUESTION WILL MOST CERTAINLY BE RAISED
AGAIN.

8. WE HAVE ALSO HEARD FROM RELIABLE SOURCE THAT "GERMAN
AND OTHER EUROPEAN DELEGATION MEMBERS" THOUGHT FABER WAS
OVERLY HARSH IN RESPONDING TO ARAB CRITICISMS. PALESTINIAN
MEMBERS OF ARAB DELEGATION (ESPECIALLY DR. AHMED SEDKI DAJANI
WHO GAVE SUPPLEMENTARY ARAB STATEMENT) WERE DESCRIBED BY
OBSERVERS BEING PARTICULARLY ACTIVE AND PARTICULARLY SHARP.
IRAQIS WERE SAID TO BE MOST HARD-NOSED. SUPPOSEDLY, TO
EVERYONE'S SURPRISE, THEY HELD UP ISSUANCE OF COMMUNIQUE
AT LAST MINUTE (AFTER IT HAD BEEN PRINTED) BECAUSE OF
REFERENCE PUT IN BY EUROPEANS DESCRIBING PRESENT CONDITIONS
AS FAVORABLE FOR ME SETTLEMENT. REFERENCE WAS DELETED CAUSING
ISSUANCE OF COMMUNIQUE TO BE DELAYED UNTIL AFTER DAYBREAK
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SUNDAY MORNING.

9. EMBASSY POUCHING COPIES OF IALOGUE DOCUMENTATION TO
DEPARTMENT AND USEC BRUSSELS. OTHER ADDRESSEES DESIRING
COMPLETE PACKAGE PLEASE ADVISE.
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